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Draft statement of mutual commitments on peacebuilding in Guinea between the Government of Guinea and the Peacebuilding Commission

I. Background

1. On 21 October 2010, the Government of Guinea addressed a letter to the Chairperson of the Peacebuilding Commission requesting that Guinea be placed on the Commission's agenda. The letter and its unofficial translation were shared with the members of the Commission on 26 October 2010. The Chairperson informed the members of the Commission that he intended to undertake consultations and suggest possible next steps.

2. Following the presidential elections, the Chairperson of the Peacebuilding Commission addressed a letter to the new Government, requesting it to reaffirm Guinea's request for the support of the Commission. The letter and its unofficial translation were shared with the members of the Commission on 11 January 2011.

3. In its letter to the Chairperson of the Peacebuilding Commission dated 24 January 2011, the Government of Guinea reaffirmed its request for the Commission's support and identified three peacebuilding priorities, namely the promotion of national reconciliation and unity, particularly in relation to the pre- and post-electoral clashes that the country had experienced; security and defence sector reform; and the youth and women's employment policy. The letter and its unofficial translation were shared with members of the Commission on 1 February 2011.

4. The Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission decided on 23 February 2011 to place Guinea on its agenda and elected Ambassador Sylvie Lucas, the Permanent Representative of Luxembourg to the United Nations, as Chairperson of the Guinea configuration. Subsequently, the Chairperson led an initial Peacebuilding Commission mission to Guinea from 3 to 10 April 2011. That mission was followed by a technical mission, comprising entities of the United Nations system, in May 2011. Following the two missions, an initial draft of the statement of mutual commitments was shared with the Government of Guinea on 23 June 2011 and with the members of the Guinea configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission

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on 1 July 2011. The Chairperson conducted a second mission to Guinea from 5 to 6 September, during which she held discussions with the Government and other key actors in order to finalize the statement of mutual commitments. The present statement of mutual commitments is informed by the assessments of these three missions and also takes into account existing national plans; strategies and national efforts to implement them; and international support for their implementation.

5. The statement of mutual commitments is a document negotiated between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Government of Guinea, in a consultation process with other key stakeholders, including the United Nations system, civil society and the private sector, bilateral and multilateral partners and regional organizations. The statement is based on the principles of national ownership and leadership, partnership in support of national efforts in peacebuilding and mutual accountability for results. The statement is intended to be a flexible instrument that can be adjusted in the light of developments in the country. The statement focuses on peacebuilding challenges in Guinea in the context of the priorities for the engagement between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Government of Guinea; highlights the key issues and actions to be taken for each of the peacebuilding priorities; spells out the engagements of both the Peacebuilding Commission and the Government; and defines the frequency with which the mutual commitments are to be reviewed.

6. The Government of Guinea and its partners recognize the role of regional organizations and agree on the need to combine regional approaches with national solutions, taking into account the common challenges faced by countries in the region, four of which are on the Peacebuilding Commission's agenda. Regional cooperation also provides an opportunity for the respective countries to exchange knowledge and experiences.

II. Peacebuilding priorities

7. The post-election period in Guinea, following the inauguration of the country's first democratically elected President, provides an opportunity for the country and its partners to deepen the democratic gains made to date, address long-standing challenges to peace and security and quickly deliver tangible improvements in living standards to a population eager to benefit from a peace and democracy dividend after years of instability and authoritarian regimes.

8. The Government is also faced with the challenge of responding to Guineans' expectations for a revitalized economy, employment opportunities and quality basic services, including water and electricity, while the public finances inherited from previous Governments are in a worrying state. Despite the country's economic potential, socio-economic conditions have deteriorated over the last few years. The World Bank reports that in 2009 the country registered its worst economic performance of the decade, with GDP per capita falling by 3.4 per cent. The country will need rapid reform and an injection of funds in order to begin delivering on key services, without which Guineans, who expect to reap the dividends of democracy, are likely to become disillusioned.

9. The peacebuilding priorities agreed between the Government and the Peacebuilding Commission are (a) the promotion of national reconciliation and unity, (b) security and defence sector reform, and (c) youth and women's employment policy. The relatively smooth transition from the military regime to

civilian rule, marked by the successful conduct of the presidential elections, has opened up the political space and provided an opportunity to address these issues. Each of these peacebuilding priorities encompasses a vast array of major issues and potential actions. Various international partners and entities of the United Nations system as well as African regional and subregional organizations have already taken steps to support national peacebuilding efforts, including in these three areas. But much remains to be done to consolidate progress and strengthen the foundations of political stability, economic recovery and social cohesion. Thus, in supporting the peacebuilding effort in Guinea, the Peacebuilding Commission will focus on carefully targeted entry points in each priority area of engagement in order to be able to have a discernible impact and add value to the efforts already being undertaken.

10. From 2008 to 2010, Guinea benefited from Peacebuilding Fund support totalling US$ 12.5 million, invested in the areas of security sector reform, human rights, promotion of political dialogue and mediation support. The engagement of the Peacebuilding Commission and further support from the Peacebuilding Fund will build on the foundations established by this initial funding as well as on lessons learned.

11. The country's peacebuilding priorities should be viewed within the broader context of peacebuilding and development set out in its Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper 2011-2012, and in particular its first priority, "Improving governance and building human and institutional capacity", of which security sector reform and national reconciliation are major components.

A. Promotion of national reconciliation and unity

12. Guinea's need for national reconciliation is not the result of a civil conflict. Instead, it is the cumulative effect of several decades of authoritarian rule and military dictatorship which has left a legacy of fractured civilian-military relationships, a population that has lost all confidence in those that govern it, gross human rights violations and deep inter-ethnic rivalry, exacerbated during the 2010 presidential elections. As Guineans have said, "we have not lived through violent conflict, but we face the same challenges as a country emerging from violent conflict". Reconciliation efforts need to be multidimensional and must seek to re-establish relations between the population and the State/armed forces, on the one hand, and among Guineans themselves, on the other.

13. The main challenge is to overcome the sense of grievance felt by the various segments of the population. To establish a lasting peace in Guinea, it is therefore important for national reconciliation efforts to be focused on combating impunity. While the events of 28 September 2009 are perceived as particularly traumatic for all Guineans, there is broad consensus on the need to ensure that justice is done in respect of the violence and ill-treatment suffered by the population under successive regimes since 1958.

14. There is also a risk of deepening rifts between communities and subsequent exacerbation of ethnic issues within Guinean society, particularly in the run-up to the national and local elections. The creation of an environment conducive to dialogue between communities as well as between political leaders is required. In these efforts, religion and faith can play an important role as a link between communities.

Priority actions

15. The establishment of a framework for inclusive inter-Guinean dialogue on national reconciliation, as envisaged by the Government, could provide the opportunity to develop consensus on the main issues and the mechanisms to be put in place with the involvement of all State and non-State actors. This consultation process should build on relevant outcomes of past national dialogue and consultations, and relevant lessons and experiences from past and ongoing initiatives, including those supported by the Peacebuilding Fund, as well as those recently undertaken by the Government with the involvement of religious leaders and regional advisers. The process will also draw on relevant experiences of other countries.

16. Holding parliamentary and local elections without delay is seen as a key step in restoring trust and completing the transition to democracy. In this respect, there is a need for the Government to engage in open dialogue with all political actors on issues related to these elections. This inclusive approach is particularly important for matters relating to the validity of the current electoral list, which should be addressed in a spirit of broad consultation in order to mitigate the risks of tension and mistrust that could result from further delays.

17. Establishment of mechanisms to respond to the State violence suffered by Guineans since 1958, particularly the most recent incidents. Action to support the victims of these incidents, especially those that occurred from 2006 to 2009, will send a strong signal to victims, perpetrators and the population in general. The response to the events of 28 September 2009 should be guided by the conclusions of the International Commission of Inquiry of the United Nations Secretary-General, which established that at least 156 demonstrators disappeared or were killed and at least 109 women were subjected to rape and other sexual violence.

18. Development of national reconciliation mechanisms. A mechanism similar to the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commissions used in other contexts, with the aim of providing a framework for the reconciliation effort and ultimately attaining forgiveness, will be established. While Guinea will be able to draw inspiration from past experiences in other countries, it will be important for it to develop a Guinean model that takes into account the country's specific characteristics. The establishment of the Independent National Commission for Human Rights should also be completed as a priority. The ad hoc civilian-military committee could be strengthened and its scope expanded in order to encourage reconciliation, particularly among the various security and defence forces and between those forces and the civilian population. A committee of regional advisers could also play a role in bringing together the different communities.

B. Security and defence sector reform

19. Reforming the security sector is key both to strengthening national peacebuilding efforts and to consolidating the rule of law newly restored in Guinea. Security sector reforms were accorded a high priority in the transitional road map, a priority that has been reaffirmed by the civilian Government in place.

20. In order to better understand the various challenges related to the security sector, a sector assessment was undertaken in 2010 under the auspices of the

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), with the assistance and involvement of the African Union and the United Nations. The security and defence forces, judiciary, customs services, financial management, civilian oversight, and civilian-military relations came under review. The report noted structural shortcomings in the functioning of the army, police, and judicial system, which have led to impunity in respect of human rights violations, and increased mistrust between the security forces and the population. The report points out the need for democratic and civilian control; demilitarization of the Guinean Administration and a reversal of the abnormally high officer-to-soldier ratios in the armed forces; a return to appropriate roles (and sizes) for the other security structures (in particular the police but also the customs services and other structures) relative to the army; a concerted approach to tackling organized crime (Conakry has become a major transit centre for cocaine trafficking in West Africa); and work on cross-cutting issues such as gender and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

21. A national seminar on security sector reform in Guinea was held from 28 to 31 March 2011. At that seminar, the President of the Republic officially launched the country's security sector reform process, in the presence of representatives of the United Nations, the African Union, the European Union, and other bilateral and multilateral partners. A report and a road map were produced following the seminar and an action plan is being developed. The Government has set up a national steering committee for security sector reform, chaired by the President (in his capacity as Minister of Defence), to be supported by a series of technical committees including a defence committee. The technical committees began to meet in May 2011. They are required to produce the action plan by identifying short-, medium- and long-term objectives. The preparation of this action plan is a crucial step towards enabling the coordinated provision of assistance for security sector reform.

22. Successful security sector reform could potentially have a positive impact on reconciliation efforts, since many Guineans have been victims of abuse and the poor functioning of the security sector. There is also a link between security sector reform and youth employment. The efforts under way to reintegrate young people who have been associated with the army in recent years, including efforts financed by the Peacebuilding Fund, could inspire programmes to rehabilitate the workforce originating from a reduction in the size of the army.

23. Given the scale of the drug problem in Guinea and in the subregion, efforts to combat drug trafficking and transnational crime should be a component of security sector reform. An opportunity certainly exists to address the issue as part of a regional approach, building on the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, which now has four countries of the subregion on its agenda, as well as on the West Africa Coast Initiative.

24. The weakness of the judiciary identified in the security sector assessment report should be corrected in order to offer Guineans appropriate channels of appeal to ensure that their rights are respected. The efforts undertaken by the Peacebuilding Commission during the transition to ensure a minimum judicial function should constitute the entry point for further action in this sector.

Priority actions

25. The Peacebuilding Commission should advocate for continued progress in security sector reform planning, laying the foundations for a smaller, more

professional army; police and gendarmerie under civilian and democratic control; and strengthened judicial institutions. More specifically, three main aspects of security sector reform in Guinea could benefit from the support of the Peacebuilding Commission and the United Nations system, namely, strategy development, civilian oversight, and coherence of initiatives and support provided by all key partners. The Peacebuilding Fund should focus on immediate needs central to security sector reform — such as the census of all security forces — while standing ready to support the planning process, as priorities are negotiated, and the strengthening of the police.

26. The Government and its partners should continue preparation of an action plan that contains a long-term view of the security sector, including national security policy documents and a clear definition of the roles and responsibilities of actors involved in the security sector.

27. There is also a need to establish and strengthen mechanisms and processes for civilian monitoring and oversight of the security sector, especially through the inclusion of civilian stakeholders in the reform process; legislative reforms; capacity-building for the key Government departments concerned, the National Transition Council/parliament, the judiciary, national human rights institutions and civil society; and the establishment and strengthening of relevant bodies such as parliamentary committees to oversee the security and defence sector, the civilian-military committee and the defence committee.

28. Support is needed for efforts to improve the coherence of initiatives taken by the international community, including the United Nations system, in support of security sector reform. Support for such efforts should be based on existing inter-donor mechanisms and forums for dialogue and should allow all stakeholders to share information and identify useful synergies in this process.

29. Provision should be made to support justice reform as undertaken by the Government following consultations that provided a candid assessment of the situation.

C. Youth and women's employment policy

30. In Guinea, youth, defined as the segment of the female and male population in the 15-35 age range, accounts for 61 per cent of the total population. The combination of unemployment and underemployment among young people has made this group particularly susceptible to recruitment by armed groups and involvement in criminal activities. More recently, during the electoral period, young Guineans were manipulated by political groups and involved in violence. The police and the army have recruited a large number of young people, particularly young men, including those under 18 years of age. These young people, together with their colleagues affected by the crisis, need support to ensure their rehabilitation and socio-economic reintegration.

31. Women constitute an important part of the workforce and their participation in the country's socio-economic development is a major factor in peacebuilding. Six of the 37 ministers appointed to President Condé's Government are women, which is higher than the level of female representation in the transitional Government. The fact that the Government has identified women's and youth employment as a priority underlines the importance that they will be given in the Government's policies and decisions.

32. Experience shows that the most successful forms of intervention in these areas consist of training and apprenticeship initiatives; the granting of small start-up loans (in microcredit schemes); public work efforts (cash for work and food for work); and promulgation of policies that target the most vulnerable categories of youth and women. Efforts should be made to develop youth employment initiatives with an impact on peacebuilding. For instance, a focus could be placed on preventing the social crises that could originate in certain groups, especially young people who feel abandoned, or on initiatives to support the political, economic and social empowerment of women, given that women play an important role, particularly at the community level, in defusing tensions and maintaining basic economic activities. Investments in girls, often overlooked, have been shown to provide a significant development dividend, particularly in the areas of food security and education.

33. Guinea has abundant natural resources in the agricultural and mining sectors, which are potential key sectors for the country's economic growth. Alongside major projects in the energy, communications infrastructure and housing sectors, these sectors have the potential to generate considerable employment opportunities for young people, women and Guineans in general. This will however require an education and vocational training system capable of producing a skilled workforce. Past education policies have instead focused on university education. As a result the country has many unemployed graduates, while at the same time it lacks the skilled workers, technicians and professionals needed in the main sectors of economic growth, such as mining and agriculture. When large mining companies are unable to find skilled labour in Guinea, they will be liable to recruit workers in other countries of the subregion, which could give rise to social tensions.

Priority actions

34. Initial efforts by the Government to empower young people and women can be built upon to meet the critical needs of these two groups.

35. Development of a coherent long-term youth employment policy, with particular attention paid to elements contributing to peacebuilding and the prevention of social tensions; clarification of roles and responsibilities within the Government regarding youth employment.

36. A parallel priority is the development of a coherent women's employment policy, with particular attention paid to elements contributing to peacebuilding and the prevention of social tensions, based on existing initiatives and past experience, with clarification of roles and responsibilities within the Government regarding women's employment and empowerment.

37. There is also need for a review of the education and vocational training system in order to bring it into line with the needs of the labour market. More emphasis should be given to vocational training, by developing training curricula, rehabilitating technical schools and technical centres for vocational training, and by developing non-formal education programmes to provide opportunities for young people unable to pursue a formal education.

38. Also important is development of training and employment programmes, including quick-impact projects targeting young people, in areas that have experienced particular social tensions in the past or are at risk of doing so in the future. Communities close to mining areas deserve special attention in this regard.

39. Action should be taken to implement the national strategy to combat gender-based violence, mainstreaming of Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008) in national policies and programmes, and support for women's participation in the 2011 parliamentary elections.

40. Effort should be made to involve women in the national reconciliation process as well as in the process of security sector reform.

III. Mutual commitments

A. Promotion of national reconciliation and unity

41. The Government of Guinea undertakes to:

(a) Organize and conduct consultations to solicit the opinions of Guineans (within the country and abroad) and partners on national reconciliation mechanisms and the key issues to be addressed in a national reconciliation process, and, based on those consultations, develop a national reconciliation programme;

(b) Take the lead in mobilizing and coordinating a response (such as reparation, justice) in respect of victims of the large-scale violence committed by the State and security forces, paying immediate attention to the victims of recent violence, including that of 28 September 2009;

(c) Provide the college of judges with the necessary resources to continue investigations into the violence of 28 September 2009 and pursue cooperation in this regard with the International Criminal Court;

(d) Take the necessary steps to set up a mechanism similar to the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation mechanism and ensure that it has the necessary resources and independence;

(e) Enter into dialogue with political actors, particularly on the issue of the parliamentary elections that are scheduled to take place before the end of 2011 with a view to resolving the outstanding technical and political issues regarding the organization of the elections in a spirit of dialogue and inclusiveness;

(f) Continue the process of establishing an Independent National Commission for Human Rights and strengthen the ad hoc civilian-military committee as mechanisms to support national reconciliation;

(g) Enter into dialogue with key national actors on other important processes or relevant reforms for peacebuilding.

42. The Peacebuilding Commission undertakes to:

In the short term:

(a) Work with the Government of Guinea, the African Union, ECOWAS and other key stakeholders and facilitate the strengthening of dialogue between the Government and all actors, especially political parties, with a view to reaching a consensus on issues relating to the parliamentary and local elections, including the electoral calendar;

(b) Mobilize the assistance of the international community, as well as the Group of Friends of Guinea, for the parliamentary elections, including assistance to ensure security during the elections;

(c) Work with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in providing political and financial support for consultations on the national reconciliation process and mechanisms and helping the Guineans to develop a national reconciliation programme;

(d) Discuss with the Government the options for supporting the victims of the events that occurred on 28 September 2009 and mobilize the necessary resources;

In the medium and long term:

(e) Facilitate the mobilization of the relevant resources, experience and expertise needed for the national reconciliation process;

(f) Assist the Government to establish a Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission. Specific activities will include bringing together experts from such institutions as the International Centre for Transitional Justice and the South Africa-based Institute for Justice and Reconciliation in order to help draw up the terms of reference for the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission; organizing workshops for the Commissioners and staff of the Commission; and mobilizing resources to contribute to the financing of the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation process;

(g) Provide a platform for dialogue between the Government and key national stakeholders on peacebuilding issues.

B. Security and defence sector reform

43. The Government of Guinea undertakes to:

(a) Pursue as a priority the security sector reform process and continue to guide the process of developing a comprehensive security sector reform plan (action plan) building on the momentum generated by the national seminar held in March 2011 and ideas arising from that seminar;

(b) Develop the national policies and legislative instruments required for the implementation of the security sector reform action plan;

(c) Bring into operation the national and sector-specific technical committees and ensure that their composition includes stakeholders from civil society;

(d) Initiate the short-term actions and measures recommended by the security sector reform assessment and the national seminar;

(e) Further clarify the respective roles and responsibilities of the police and the army;

(f) Ensure the transparency of financial management in the defence and security sector;

(g) Initiate or continue dialogue with neighbouring countries with a view to developing and implementing a regional approach to security issues common to the subregion;

(h) Develop mechanisms and instruments that will reinforce civilian oversight of the security sector, including a parliamentary committee on defence and security;

(i) Strengthen the ad hoc civilian-military committee or institutionalize a similar civilian-military mechanism to help resolve specific issues associated with civilian-military relations;

(j) Undertake justice reform on the basis of the recommendations contained in the security sector assessment report.

44. The Peacebuilding Commission undertakes to:

In the short term:

(a) Provide a platform to coordinate, in collaboration with the United Nations in Conakry and the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA) in Dakar, the actors involved in providing support and advice for the process of developing a Guinean vision of security sector reform (action plan) as well as the definition of roles and responsibilities of actors involved in the security sector;

(b) Advocate for international support — including with the catalytic support of the Peacebuilding Fund — for quick-win projects with a view to building a partnership for security sector reform. This could include, for example, the continuation of the census of security forces in Guinea in accordance with international expertise and standards, possibly supported by Peacebuilding Commission members who have relevant expertise; contributions to the temporary accommodation of military personnel relocated from Conakry to other provinces; or retirement programmes;

(c) Advocate for the rapid improvement of financial transparency in the army;

(d) Contribute to current efforts to further strengthen the Special Force for a Safe Electoral Process (FOSSEPEL) with a view to the upcoming parliamentary and local elections;

In the medium and long term:

(e) Support the establishment and strengthening of mechanisms and processes for civilian monitoring and oversight of the security sector, including by drawing on the relevant experience of member States and strengthening capacity and mechanisms at the level of the Government, parliament and civil society in order to better oversee the security sector;

(f) Provide a platform (in New York and Conakry) for key international actors engaged in security sector reform to pursue policy dialogue with the Government and enhance the coordination of their assistance;

(g) Help to mobilize relevant experience of other countries on the Peacebuilding Commission's agenda, especially within the subregion, and bring regional and national actors together to develop regional approaches to security sector reform-related issues such as drug trafficking and transnational organized crime.

C. Youth and women's employment policy

45. The Government of Guinea undertakes to:

(a) Develop coherent policies on youth and women's employment, paying particular attention to elements contributing to peacebuilding and the prevention of social tensions;

(b) Clarify the division of responsibilities within the Government on the issues of youth, education and employment, including the economic empowerment of women, and take rapid steps to improve internal coherence;

(c) Take the necessary measures to promote the economic empowerment of women and youth;

(d) Review the national education and vocational training system with a view to developing the skills required in major economic sectors such as mining, agriculture and energy;

(e) Further promote civic education and positive values in the education system, as well as in informal and non-formal education. In formulating activities, take into account the constraints imposed by the literacy level of the population;

(f) Make the private sector, and in particular the mining companies, aware of their potential to contribute to peacebuilding, including through social responsibility practices that could benefit youth, women and communities close to mining areas;

(g) Implement the national strategy to combat gender-based violence, mainstream Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008) in national policies and programmes and promote women's participation in the 2011 parliamentary elections and future local elections;

(h) Support and encourage the development of microfinance initiatives.

46. The Peacebuilding Commission undertakes to:

In the short term:

(a) Assist in the mobilization of resources to support a public works and peace dividends programme, focused on youth and women, in order to consolidate the initiatives of other partners in this area, including with additional catalytic support from the Peacebuilding Fund;

(b) Work with the International Labour Organization, the World Bank, other United Nations entities and bilateral partners to support a comprehensive labour market survey in key economic sectors, in order to inform the process of redefining education and vocational training policies in the light of labour market requirements;

In the medium and long term:

(c) Advise the Government in the process of developing coherent youth and women's employment policies and programmes, paying particular attention to elements contributing to peacebuilding and the prevention of social tensions;

(d) Support and encourage the development of microfinance initiatives;

(e) Work with other configurations of the Peacebuilding Commission in the subregion to bring together relevant experience in the area of youth and women's employment and advise Guinea accordingly;

(f) Support the Government and women's organizations in the implementation of the strategy to combat gender-based violence, the mainstreaming of Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008) in national policies and programmes, and the political participation of women.

IV. Complementarity between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund

47. To ensure complementarity between the work of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund, this statement of mutual commitments will inform the Guinea peacebuilding priority plan, which is the instrument of engagement between the Peacebuilding Fund and the Government. The priority plan, which will also take into account the lessons learned in the context of Peacebuilding Fund financing in 2008-2010, will be prepared by the Government with the support of the United Nations country team and the Peacebuilding Support Office. The priority plan will serve as the basis for Peacebuilding Fund intervention in Guinea and will include the agreed activities listed as commitments of the Peacebuilding Commission in the present statement of mutual commitments.

V. Periodic review of engagement

48. The Peacebuilding Commission and the Government agree to undertake a review of this statement of mutual commitments at six-month intervals from the date of its adoption by the Guinean configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission. The first review will provide an opportunity to revisit and refine the commitments of the Government and the Peacebuilding Commission for the medium and long term.